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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study examines the operation of youth mentoring programs in New York City. In particular, the study maps the experiences of developing and operating youth mentoring programs as articulated by the organizers or directors of 21 such programs; reviews and analyzes the research and descriptions of mentoring programs nationally to provide a framework for understanding the goals and operating conditions of the programs; and develops an inventory of the concerns of the program developers and directors, drawing implications from program practice, public policy, and research. The bulk of the study is based on extended, open-ended interviews with program directors and others in supervisory or managerial roles. The research shows that: (1) mentoring is usually regarded as a one-to-one relationship between an adult and a youth that continues over time; (2) a wide range of perceptions of the goals of the mentoring relationship exists; and (3) good mentors have motivation, personal commitment, realistic or high expectations, flexibility, respect for the individual's right to make choices, firmness, supportive tendencies, and good listening skills. Specific recommendations are provided for supporting and improving mentoring programs. The 21 programs in the study and 14 references are listed. (JB)

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MENTORING IN ACTION

THE EFFORTS OF PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK CITY

Erwin Flaxman, Ph.D. & Carol Ascher, Ph.D.

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PREFACE

Mentoring in Action: The Efforts of Programs in New York City had its beginning in 1989, when the Ford Foundation funded the School and Business Alliance (SABA), Inc. of New York City to conduct a study of urban mentoring programs. However, because of changes in management at SABA, Inc., the study was delayed until July of 1990, when SABA, Inc. was folded into the New York City Partnership, which assumed responsibility for all its activities, including the mentoring study. Shortly thereafter, the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University was contacted to conduct the research.

Dr. Erwin Flaxman and Dr. Carol Ascher drew their initial sample of programs for the study from those on which SABA, Inc. had gathered information when it acted as a clearinghouse in 1989-90. During the course of the research, they also added other programs which the Partnership identified. It is important to understand, however, that the group on which this study is based is by no means exhaustive. Clearly, a great number of mentoring programs in New York City which are worthy of study did not become part of this research.

We think that *Mentoring in Action* is an important contribution to the emerging research on mentoring. It shows how much valuable information can be gained without formal evaluations or a quantitative study. Among its many valuable contributions, Flaxman's and Ascher's research shows us that the answer to the most important question in the mentoring field--Does it work?--is very complex. *Mentoring in Action* identifies the complexities involved in the mentoring relationships, and sets us much further on that road of examining the intervention.

The New York City Partnership is pleased to have been part of *Mentoring in Action: The Efforts of Programs in New York City*.

Jill Goldsmith
Director of Education
New York City Partnership

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the time and attention given to us by the directors and other staff of many mentoring programs in New York City we interviewed for this study. We hope that we have accurately and sensitively conveyed their keen insights into the operation of mentoring programs. Marc Freedman and Bret Halverson have also generously given us their reflections on the institutionalization of mentoring. Finally, we thank Sherri Dinacci and Jill Goldsmith of the New York City Partnership for their help in setting up this study and introducing us to the world of New York City mentoring.

The study of New York City mentoring programs was conducted under contract to the New York City Partnership, with funds from the Ford Foundation, whose support we appreciate.

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CHAPTER 1
THE PROMISE OF MENTORING

ANTIPOVERTY EFFORTS AND THE ORIGINS OF MENTORING

Over the last decade, youth mentoring has evolved as a planned effort to create a sustained one-to-one relationship between individuals of different ages, and sometimes races and social classes, to support the development of the younger person. The youth and the mentor form a bond for the benefit of both parties. As such, mentoring represents a shift in vision in the nation's antipoverty efforts aimed at youth.

By the 1980s, it was widely held that the antipoverty efforts of the preceding decades, which used developmental or remedial education and training programs to improve the lot of disadvantaged youth, had not fulfilled their promise. Most compensatory education and youth employment programs were viewed as only marginally successful in forestalling academic failure or dropping out of school, or in making youth employable for anything but low-skill jobs. For many youth even our initial successes in Head Start, Title I, and Chapter 1 programs did not appear to be sustained over time.

Moreover, despite these programs, by the end of the 1980s, there were clear signs of a decline in the well-being of youth. Rates of substance abuse, early and unprotected sexual intercourse, and teenage suicide were all increasing because homes and communities were in decline (Dryfoos, 1990). Today, all youth are at risk for growing up without good or abundant adult influences. Some, however, are clearly at greater risk than others. Poverty, prejudice, and differential access to economic opportunities; family environments that increase risk, rather than buffer youth against it; disorganized and unsafe neighborhoods that are bereft of middle-class adults; deviant subcultures, including peer groups; and schools that are organized narrowly for academic learning--all affect youths' growth and development (Ianni, 1992).

Although many youth are resilient enough to withstand the stresses of their environments and grow up to be competent adults, many are not. These youth usually do not easily see alternatives to life as they know it. Instead, they limit their choices based on their often astute (but not necessarily correct) reading of their options, or they act impulsively or violently to relieve their stress and gratify themselves.

Past interventions designed solely to impart skills or to manipulate the youth's motivations, attitudes, or behaviors have fallen short in helping youth develop under adverse and limited conditions. In the model of the earlier antipoverty efforts, youth were either considered deficient in some way (intellectually, culturally, or even morally), or harmless victims of a society structured to limit their opportunities. Mechanistically, the programs either provided an array of compensatory learnings and services, or tried to eliminate barriers to the youth's advancement through the courts and legislation. But the models for these interventions could not account for the fact that these youth were complex physical, psychological, and social beings in environments and institutions over which they felt they had little control. Caring for and helping them negotiate these environments or to use these institutions well was not part of the original design of these programs; when it happened, it was unplanned and fortuitous, and not considered part of the programs' effects.

Thus, mentoring began as an alternative initiative to previous antipoverty efforts. In attempting to duplicate how people behave under natural conditions, its goal has been to give them something closer to what they need. As an ideal, mentoring bypasses the scientism and technicism of many educational and social programs, which appear remote from lived experiences. In this, it has appeared to be a sensible and socially moral response to the difficulty of growing up in the United States today.

Planned mentoring is also the product of the decade of privatization, not only of the economy but of our social and civic life. The 1980s has been called the selfish decade, a time when both individuals and government abrogated their social responsibilities. But the recognition of the increasing risk of youth during this period has prompted community leaders, foundations, the private sector, and some parts of the government to find in

mentoring an antidote to the shift toward privacy and self-interest. Thus, unlike other antipoverty efforts, mentoring is volunteeristic in its ethos.

Some of the most vocal advocates of mentoring represent the most endangered African-American communities. To them mentoring is a buffer against the threat of social nihilism, a way of reviving the family and community networks that in the past have sustained the community against external and internal threats (West, 1991). Activists within both the African-American and Latino communities have allied themselves with corporations, government, and foundations to create a nurturing and supportive environment for the endangered youth in their communities. To the minority community the renewal of institutions to help the youth is also a way of nurturing future leaders, who are in danger of being lost without help.

For corporations, both benevolence and self-interest in ensuring the quality of the future workforce have been primary motives. Throughout the country corporations are beginning to both financially support mentoring programs and provide mentors to programs in their local communities. In fact, mentoring is something corporate officials understand. Since the pre-industrial worlds of the master-apprentice relationship and the guilds, mentoring has always been part of the training and culture of the world of work. (The youth apprenticeship, its contemporary manifestation, is already a national policy in Germany and the United Kingdom.) Within corporations, the novice on the shop floor, or the new manager in the office, is formally or informally "apprenticed" to the expert or the senior manager to learn both the appropriate skills for doing his or her job and the culture of the unit. At the same time, the mentor helps the apprentice to overcome any barriers to personal success or well-being and to work at full productivity.

Mentoring has also been substantially advanced by the money and public influence of millionaires, who have become directly engaged in mentoring both as volunteers and through foundations like *I Have a Dream* or the *One to One Foundation*. For these privileged individuals of our society, mentoring is a social cause: a way of improving our country through enhancing the lives of less advantaged youth who will comprise its future.

Many professionals, particularly those in education and the social service fields, have also chosen to support mentoring. Some are reformers in spirit, who come to mentoring with bureaucratic experience in government institutions serving the poor, or in agencies with traditions of community benevolence. Others are unreconstructed liberals or radicals with the commitment and knowledge to use existing systems to improve the social well-being of unprotected segments of society. Along with corporations and local organizations, they either create programs where none existed or enlarge the portfolios of existing youth programs.

THE MENTORING IDEAL AND THE SOCIAL AGENDA

The heart of natural or spontaneous mentoring has always been assistance during a period of transition--from childhood into adolescence, from adolescence into young adulthood, or from novice into expert in the world of work. Assisting in a transition is also part of the mentoring programs being designed today. These new, planned mentoring interventions catch youth at a time when they need help in making choices and becoming responsible for their bodies and their own safety, their academic achievement, and their occupational future.

Mentoring as it now exists, in all kinds of programs and efforts, expresses two basic social ideals and meets two fundamental social agendas. One is to take care of youth in danger of not maturing well, especially those whose well-being is at greatest risk because of family and community environments. Assuming a caretaking function, this kind of mentoring aims to assist the "whole child." This is more than helping the youth make a social or psychological transition, or an induction into a new role. Rather, the mentor compensates for, or replaces, a missing or damaging person or community influence and provides for alternative developmental and social experiences. The return on such an investment is the personal, social, and economic well-being of a future generation; to the society it means less pathology and more civility.

Stemming from a common national fear that youth lack the skills and attitudes to maintain our country's competitiveness, there is a second ideal of mentoring, with a more

narrow agenda: to make youth a better economic resource. Mentoring here is directed at a wider group of youth, those not necessarily in trouble. It is a strategy to increase their "resourcefulness," and its purpose is more instrumental than caretaking. Yet here too, mentoring provides the important function of enhancing the society through improving the life chances of some youth.

THE GOALS OF MENTORING

Because planned mentoring is a relatively recent intervention, we do not know yet how it will affect its young recipients over the long run--if at all. Nevertheless, the past decade has made clear what as a society we would like mentoring to achieve.

First, we want it to help youth gain social learning and command over the tasks of their everyday life, in school, at work, in interpersonal relationships generally, in the community, and in the society--now and in the future: in short, to become competent. This occurs in the mentoring relationship through jointly carried-out activities in which the mentor alternately models, teaches, manages, questions, and structures a task for the youth. Although the "learning" is sometimes cognitive, it is always related to the youth's social functioning; and there are also activities that expose the youth to new educational, social, and cultural experiences. In each case, the hope is that the learning embedded in mentoring can be transferred to other tasks and activities, which the youth can now better execute, with a greater sense of personal accomplishment.

Second, we want the mentoring relationship to build character and a sense of self in youth, to provide them different incentives, motives, and values, and to encourage them to forego immediate, often self-defeating, gratification for more long-range goals. This shift involves some teaching and constructive criticism, as well as a good deal of support and encouragement. As the mentor and the youth engage in a joint activity, they come to share word meanings, concepts, motivations, and beliefs. Sometimes, too, because of the personal attraction, the frequency of the interaction, and the familiarity and similarity of the mentor and the youth, the mentor becomes a role model, or at least someone whom the youth is willing to trust and use as a helper or caretaker (Gallimore, Tharp, and John-Steiner, 1992).

The mentor, acting as a mediator and interpreter of experiences, teaches youth to compare themselves with others in new ways, to rely on acceptable social standards, and to become sensitive to others' opinions. Because the mentor is less a critic and judge than a window onto new experiences, the youth's self-esteem can be enhanced by the mentor, whose regard emerges from a joint participation with the youth in a mutually important activity.

These are the changes we look for in the quality of the youth's development and their lives. But we also look for the changes in concrete behaviors, like more academic success and persistence, less substance abuse, fewer teenage pregnancies and physical and mental illness, less juvenile crime and more social harmony, and greater productivity and even creativity at the workplace.

Unfortunately, we know very little about what mentoring will accomplish, because there is very little research on its effects. We have many conceptualizations and descriptive studies of mentoring (Flaxman, Ascher, & Harrington, 1988; Freedman, 1991). But, with the exception of studies by Cave and Quint (1990) and McPartland and Nettles (1991), there is little research on program implementation or studies using experimental designs. Moreover, there are no longitudinal studies to inform us of mentoring's sustained effects. This means we do not yet know what kind of mentors or mentoring programs can help youth, and in what direction. This research is important to temper our fervor. The danger in running mentoring programs may be that we are looking for too much from too small an effort, or that we will become impatient and lose heart when we do not see these changes. Arlene Mark, a sponsor and mentor in *I Have A Dream* in New York City, has suggested, "We will only know who can be helped, or what is the right kind of mentoring when we try it." We would like to add--and when we study what we have tried.

THE STUDY OF MENTORING IN NEW YORK CITY

The descriptive research on the operation of youth mentoring programs in New York City analyzed in this report was conducted by the Institute for Urban and Minority Education

at Teachers College, Columbia University, under contract with the New York City Partnership. Funds for the study were provided by the Ford Foundation.

The purposes of the research were to:

1. map the experiences of developing and operating youth mentoring programs in New York City, as articulated by the organizers or directors of the programs themselves;
2. review and analyze the research and descriptions of mentoring programs nationally to provide a framework for understanding the goals and operating conditions of the New York City programs;
3. develop an inventory of the concerns of the program developers and directors, and draw implications for program practice, public policy, and research.

During the fall and winter of 1991-1992, we tried to contact thirty-seven programs in New York City. The program names were collected during 1989-1990 when the New York City School and Business Alliance (SABA) acted as a clearinghouse for mentoring programs in the city. In addition to this initial group, we added another set from those programs under the auspices of the New York City Partnership.

The programs studied have a variety of missions and purposes, and represent a multitude of structures. While some are only mentoring programs, others offer mentoring in the context of several other interventions. Some of the programs stem from community-based organizations, others from social service organizations, corporations, or schools.

Of the programs contacted, twenty-one programs were used in the study. (For a full list of the programs analyzed, see the Appendix.) In addition, in order to gain background information, interviews were conducted with directors of mentoring programs that extend beyond New York City, as well as with others in the mentoring field.

Our experience with the high rate of discontinued program telephone numbers, changed addresses, and no answers after a number of calls testifies to the fluidity of the mentoring programs in New York. A number of potential interviewees said they no longer ran mentoring programs. Those programs were simply dropped from the study. Other potential interviewees suggested that they should not be included in a mentoring study, since

they were not really doing mentoring. Several interviewees responded that they considered their program to be a tutoring or volunteer program, although they believed that mentoring was sufficiently enough part of their program to be included in the research. These programs were included in the study. Finally, most respondents who felt secure with the notion that they were conducting mentoring programs happily made appointments to talk.

The summary that follows is based on extended, open-ended interviews with these program directors and other individuals in supervisory or managerial roles. A standard protocol of forty-five questions, taking from an hour to two hours to answer, was used to help respondents describe their program operations, elicit their understanding of the barriers they face, and prompt their analyses of their programs' effectiveness. However, the discussions were allowed to range whenever it seemed useful. While most interviews were conducted over the telephone, seven were done at the executive offices or sites of the mentoring programs. In addition, two training sessions were observed.

Because this is an interview-based study, some of the information provided of necessity tends toward being normative, if not toward the ideal. For example, when program directors report that mentors and organizations see each other once a month, they are generally reporting what is expected by the program, and only rarely what actually takes place, or even the limits of what is tolerated for the sake of program continuity. In general, interviewees were open and eager to have their programs featured. As one interviewee responded when it was suggested that the interview could be anonymous, "I don't want to be anonymous. I'm proud of this program. I want you to highlight it!" We have followed what we assume is the will of the interviewees in naming them, particularly when their program might be enhanced.

CHAPTER 2
THE REALITY: MENTORING IN NEW YORK

This chapter draws on specific information about mentoring programs in New York, as well as on the analyses and reflections by directors and other administrators about their programs. Its goal is twofold: to map the experiences of developing and operating youth mentoring programs in the city, and to present the concerns of the program developers and directors, particularly regarding the stability and effectiveness of the programs. The chapter is divided into four sections:

- o Questions about Mentoring, Mentors and Youth
- o The Organization of the Programs
- o Mentoring in Context
- o Program Evaluations and Questions About Successful Mentoring

In each section, we use the spoken words of mentoring program administrators as a starting point for articulating possible meanings, implications, and hypotheses about mentoring in New York City.

QUESTIONS ABOUT MENTORING, MENTORS, AND YOUTH

As an emerging youth service, mentoring is in the early stages of self-definition. Moreover, because it is a volunteer enterprise, it has been defined more slowly than were it a professionalized intervention, where the goals, tasks, roles, and service procedures are explicit. In fact, as the discussion below makes clear, mentoring means quite different things in different New York City programs, and may even have a different meaning for individual mentors and staff within a single program.

What Is Mentoring?

For the directors of the programs we surveyed, mentoring is generally considered a one-to-one relationship between an adult and a youth that continues over time. In fact, age difference and the sustained relationship uniformly characterize mentoring in these programs, although both vary. The age differences between mentors and mentees range widely. At one end is the relatively narrow difference found in the *CUNY/Board of Education Student Mentor Program*, where high school students are mentored by nontraditional college students, whose average age is 28. At the other is that found in the *Health Careers Partnership* between George Washington High School and the Isabella Geriatric Center, where the high school students are mentored by Isabella staff (whose ages range widely), at the same time as they develop relationships with the geriatric residents at the Center. However, in most programs, the age difference is neither so little nor so great; instead, the mentoring is close to the ideal of one generation helping the next to develop.

The duration of the relationships also varies enormously, from as little as ten weeks to two years or more (for a fuller discussion, see p. 33ff). Most, however, are coterminous with school schedules and so last for either a semester or an academic year. In fact, what is clear in all this variation is that the range of mentoring is largely practical, and transcends any fastidiousness about appropriate age differences or how long the relationship should last.

The ideal of a one-to-one relationship is part of the ethos of all the mentoring programs we examined, despite the fact that several programs link mentors with two or more mentees. For example, *Classroom, Inc.* brings high school students to the office of private and public sector employees for two-to-one mentoring. And the ratio of youth to mentors can go much higher: five-to-one ("So the tutors don't languish if the youth don't show up") in the program at *West Side High School*, an alternative school for at-risk youth; and fifteen-to-one in the New York City Technical College's *Expanding Options for Teen Mothers*, which invites women in nontraditional occupations to coach and lecture the young women. Sometimes, too, as in the *New York Alliance for the Public Schools*' program, three or four professionals are sent to jointly mentor a single classroom. Finally, the *Harlem-Dowling West Side Center for Children and Family Services* recruits mentors both to work individually

with youth and to work with entire families. In the latter case, where troubled families are moving from public shelters into the Harlem community, the mentor works with a caseworker to help the family get acquainted with and adjust to their new neighborhood.

In fact, when program administrators talk about "one-to-one mentoring," they are not discussing an essential numerical formula; rather, they are describing their intention to provide the personalized attention and care we usually associate with a good interpersonal relationship. If a youth needs a tutor, one way or another one will be found; if an entire family needs help in adjusting, then they should receive it. Unlike traditional teaching, where everyone is supposed to learn the same curriculum, often at the same pace--despite personal interests, abilities, or conflicts--mentoring asks that these very interests and conflicts be the heart of the relationship between the adult and the youth. Thus, personalized care and attention to individual needs lies at the core of mentoring, regardless of the actual ratio of mentors to youths.

What Are the Goals of New York City's Mentoring Programs?

Program directors are clear that the purpose of mentoring is "to guide the younger person in terms of specific goals," as one interviewee puts it. However, just what kind of help or guidance the mentor will provide differs, however, depends on the philosophy and goals of the program. In fact, the programs tend to be ambiguous about whether they want to steer youth in a particular direction, provide them with options, or simply offer help for whatever they need. The observations of two program leaders capture the breadth of what as a community we believe the goals of mentoring should be: "Mentoring has to be whatever that kid needs," insists Arlene Mark, a long-time mentor in the *I Have a Dream* program. For programs with such a philosophy, the intensity of the mentoring relationship, where the mentor "almost becomes family, someone you can lean on," should not be confused with tutoring and other less complete connections. Yet for many other interviewees, this intensity is too rare to bank on; moreover, when it occurs, it is most likely to develop out of a specific activity shared by the mentor and youth. "You come together to learn American history, but then the social bonding occurs. You may be discussing the Constitution, and the

kid will bring up his court appearance," says Ed Reynolds, Principal of *West Side High School*.

The specific characteristics of mentoring can be glimpsed through the variety of goals expressed by program directors, as well as by how tightly the programs structure activities to meet these goals. In the psychological area, the goals of the programs are said to include building confidence, self-esteem, trust, and role models, as well as providing simple support and friendship from an adult. Arlene Mark of *I Have a Dream* speaks not only of building self-esteem and trying to help youth with deferred gratification, but of working with the "anger and rage and inequality and what they don't have...so that they won't sabotage what does come their way." Other programs like *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* that focus on these psychological areas see themselves as working with the "whole person," and believe that a variety of activities can help to reach this goal of personal transformation. The programs may offer tutoring or suggest that mentors take youth to cultural events, but there is much latitude for choice in the activities that are thought to help the youth develop psychologically.

In contrast, those programs whose goals are apparently narrower tend to be more specific about the activities needed to reach their goals, and the directors speak somewhat disdainfully of open-ended mentoring. As an interviewee who directs an academically focused program put it, "This is not a feel-good, touchy-feely program." Among these more structured programs, the goals range from upgrading academic skills, increasing career awareness, and setting realistic career goals, to increasing civic responsibility. *The New York Alliance for the Public Schools* talks of "increasing students' awareness of the relevance of school to work and the real world." Programs such as the *Capital American Stock Exchange's Career Mentoring Program* or *Classroom, Inc.*, both of which are under the auspices of the *New York City Partnership's Career Mentoring Program*, see their goal as acculturating students to a business environment and the world of work. Explains Charles Snow of Morgan Stanley, a driving force behind *Classroom, Inc.*, "We were having trouble recruiting entry level people. We want the students to learn the problems of the business world, its ethical values, and the financial decisions that are made." Both programs bring students from their schools to meet their mentors at the workplace. At *Expanding Options*

for Teen Mothers, people talk about helping youth handle work and family responsibilities. *The Health Careers Partnership* is even more specific: according to its proposal, its goal is to develop "a community-based, long-term approach to training and supplying skilled health care workers for Isabella and other health institutions in northern Manhattan."

Several programs go so far as to demand that specific tasks be created in line with agreed goals. The *New York City Mentoring Program* asks that early in the mentoring relationship the student and the adult define their goals and supporting activities, so that they are conscious about what they are going to accomplish together. One of the most structured programs is the redesigned *CUNY/BOE Student Mentoring Program*, which beginning in 1992 will deliver academic skills, career building, and friendship by linking groups of six eighth-grade students with two mentors in an after-school learning model. Called "Head Start for College Continuum," the program will span two years, and will include a month-long summer institute before the ninth grade. As Program Director, Eadie Shanker argues, "With structured mentoring, you have to have something in mind, a notion of the activities that make a difference."

Finally, programs appear to have subtle differences in how they see the goals of mentoring in relation to the students' current worlds and sources of pleasure and self-esteem. Some interviewees speak of acculturating the youth to a new world, say of work, and perhaps implicitly of weaning them away from a damaging environment. But others recognize that the connections of youth to their homes and neighborhoods are valuable to them, and see themselves as helping help these youth to negotiate between two worlds. As Arlene Mark has said of *I Have a Dream*,

> What we want is for them to have choices in life--not that they all go to college.... We don't [necessarily even] want them to move out of the Lower East Side, the South Bronx, or Washington Heights. They feel competent in their neighborhoods. There might be shootings, but they know the people, they feel accepted.

In this view, the question becomes one of how mentoring can gratify the youths' current needs. When structured program activities do not match the student's most urgent needs,

they may require that the youth delay their gratification for some future reward. But for many youth, as Arlene Mark suggests, unless "today" is better than "yesterday," they will only see the benefits of the intervention if the competencies they learn are useful both in the new world and in the world they already inhabit.

Are Some Mentors and Mentees Better at it Than Others?

The good mentor. The qualities of a good mentor consistently stressed by the interviewees are the qualities of any good leader, manager, school principal, teacher, or human service worker. Good mentors are said to have motivation, personal commitment, realistic expectations (or high expectations), flexibility, respect for the individual's right to make choices, firmness, supportiveness, and good listening skills. In the words of one interviewee, a good mentor is "someone who knows they won't be Joan of Arc, but will help the students along the way. Someone who honors confidentiality but not to the point of endangering the child. Someone who is realistic." Good mentors are "People who are honest and comfortable with themselves, besides liking to work with people," says Frances Pena, of Columbia University's *Double Discovery*. And Pena adds, "Luckily, these are the people who want to volunteer." Ed Reynolds, principal of *West Side High School*, whose mentors often work with highly volatile youth, describes a good mentor as "someone who puts body and soul into it!"

One of the words used most frequently in describing a good mentor is "commitment." Since mentors are volunteers, the issue of volition looms larger than it would with employees for whom a paycheck is an incentive. Not surprisingly, this commitment on the part of mentors is most concretely expressed in time given to the mentee and the program. As Stanley Gleaton of *The Harlem-Dowling West Side Center* says of mentors who don't show up, "Sometimes I'd like to fire them, but I can't!"

Research on mentoring corroborates the correlation between the amount of time the mentor spends with a mentee and the notion of a "good mentor." In 1991, the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* attempted to discover what constituted a good mentor in the program. Their study began with the assumption that good mentors were in successful

relationships, which were defined as including: time spent together; attendance of mentees at weekly meetings with the coordinator; achievement of a goal established jointly by the mentor and mentee, which each independently rated highly; both parties expressing independent satisfaction with the program and with each other; and both parties expressing a wish to continue seeing each other after the program. To give extra richness to the picture, mentor/mentee pairs were rated by school coordinators, who had watched them together. Yet when all of this was correlated, the only thing about the mentor, or about the pair, that seemed to ensure success was the amount of time the pair spent in making the relationship happen. That is, at a concrete level, the commitment of the mentor.

The ability of mentors to suggest and participate in activities that can engage youth is also an overriding concern in all mentoring programs. While interviewees speak of the difficulties many mentors experience in thinking of activities, the mentor's capacity to conceptualize what a mentee needs and to plan interventions is rarely addressed by administrators of programs aimed at giving psychological help. On the one hand, because these programs are generally open-ended about what activities meet their goals, the mentors must themselves be able to conceptualize their mentees's needs and plan activities that can meet these needs. On the other hand, when the mentoring program is structured to focus on particular academic skills or career awareness, interviewees are generally clear that a good mentor is a good planner. Martha Cameron of The Children's Aid Society's *Project LIVE*, which grounds its mentoring in a strong tutoring relationship, points out that, while good mentors "run the gamut, from mail room personnel to executives, they have to be willing to plan--not just show up--and to set achievable goals."

Finally, program directors do not talk much about mentors' caretaking styles, or even their human relation skills. It is not that such personal characteristics, whether cognitive or emotional, are not important, but rather that most interviewees seem uncertain concerning what is needed once they go beyond generalities about what makes an adult a good mentor to a youth. Not unlike the question of what makes a good teacher, good mentors may simply be hard to define. Moreover, the fact that programs are always in need of more mentors makes program directors stress their flexibility in accepting most volunteers. Pragmatically,

a good mentor becomes someone who will find a way to give committed help, regardless of personality or skills, and the program administrator just hopes that a little training will provide whatever the mentor lacks. As Eadie Shanker of the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* puts it, good mentors are not born, but made: "A good mentor is a well-trained mentor."

The good mentee. Youths who are "good" at being mentored are said to have some of the same qualities as good mentors. Most important, though, is that they want the relationship and the activities offered by the program. If the sign of good mentors is their commitment as judged by staying in the program, the sign of youths' basic desire to be mentored is reflected in their attendance. In the words of one interviewee, "A good mentee is someone who shows up!" In fact, the desire for the relationship sometimes requires that the youth take an active role in maintaining it. Arnetta English of the *Black Achievers in Industry Mentoring Program*, which matches black CEO's of Fortune 500 companies with black youth, argues that, because mentors are understandably busy, a successful mentee is someone who will take the initiative to keep in touch with the mentor:

> I try to tell my kids, listen, if you haven't heard from them, just call them. If they see a message from you I'm sure they'll call you back. I encourage them to call!

Good mentees are also youth who can "capitalize on the contact." At one level, this means the ability to relate to the specific, idiosyncratic individuals with whom they have been paired--that is, the human side of the relationship. At another level, it means the capacity to engage in the activities the mentors offer. Here, program directors talk of such desirable mentee characteristics as motivation, the wish to explore and have fun, and being open to new experiences. Obviously, where the program has narrow goals, students must also be willing and able to fit in and benefit from a prestructured enrichment. For example, those students in the *Capital American Stock Exchange Career Mentoring Program* must be interested in learning about the market, and those in *The Health Careers Partnership* must

want to learn about nursing and other health careers, particularly with geriatric patients. Leslie Mantrone of the *New York Alliance for the Public Schools*, which brings nurses, lawyers, and other professionals into the classroom, argues that the students who benefit the most from her program are the ones whose "interests are in line with what the mentors offer, who have career goals, and take the initiative in building their studies around the information given."

When programs connect youth with the private sector, there is also a certain pressure for the mentees to present their school and the youth in general in a good light. As one interviewee puts it, "You don't want to suggest a kid who's going to try to steal while he's seeing his mentor at IBM." In fact, since staff in many programs believe that an important side effect of having mentoring programs is creating support *for* the schools, they have to be particularly careful to select mentees who will act as ambassadors for the schools.

Is Mentoring a Good Strategy for At-Risk Youth?

The issue of whether mentoring is a good strategy to help at-risk youth involves two questions: Which of these youth seem most likely to benefit from a mentoring relationship? Are there some characteristics that mitigate against youth being able to participate in a successful mentoring relationship?

Many mentoring programs for at-risk youth, particularly those run by community organizations, are a way of helping the "whole child." Through the caretaking offered by the mentoring relationship, it is assumed that the youth will become less at-risk, less personally and socially harmful. In such cases, a number of factors contribute to the sense that mentoring will be a good intervention. At *Harlem-Dowling*, which provides children with a host of cultural, educational, and recreational programs, as well as therapy and at-home services, caseworkers identify those children who might benefit from having a mentor. Executive Director Stanley Gleaton, describes the rationale:

> It could be a child in a household where there isn't a male image, and they're getting older, and maybe are acting out in one way or another. Or the mother and child are very close, and we think a mentor would be good to help break

> the bond between mother and child. Or the child doesn't get out much, and the caseworker thinks he needs to get out more.

Not all mentoring is so directly prescriptive, but the rationale here suggests that when mentoring has a caretaking function, much of it is designed to act as an antidote to a harmful situation.

Although program directors generally like to believe that "everyone can benefit from having a mentor," the exigencies of running a program also make it clear that some students are easier to work with than others. "They can't be so devastated by their home situation that they don't come to school!" insists one interviewee, who echoes a common position that the student mentees can't be truants. Others point out that students also cannot be behavior problems, too defended, "too tough," too aggressive, or cannot be too submerged in their subculture, with its own alternative gratifications.

A common assertion is that the students chosen for mentoring should be the ones who "have a chance of succeeding with the addition of this help" or "can improve in a one-to-one relationship." At *Big Brothers/Big Sisters*, any child who is not considered capable of developing a one-to-one relationship is not assigned a mentor, but is referred to therapy instead. Children spoken of as unlikely candidates for mentoring are those who are too angry or too withdrawn for a relationship with a stranger. As Trish Kerle at *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* puts it, "The essential quality is the child's ability to develop a bonding relationship. Some kids are too defended and hurt for that."

Several interviewees support the notion (albeit with reluctance) that tough, or highly aggressive, students make particularly difficult mentees. Of the twenty-three students who started the *I Have a Dream* program, "six to nine were too tough and too smart for the program." Says Arlene Mark,

> We weren't quick enough for them--even if we were willing to do the quickest, roughest thing there was to do. The mentors didn't hold them. They were already so trained to live the way their street and peers lived. They'd have to give up too much of that bravado if they were going to try the things we wanted them to try. So we did better with the kids who weren't as

> suave, who were able to have it proven to them that things might go better if they did it our way.

Boys Harbor, a community service agency in Harlem, made a special effort to match aggressive boys with mentors. Although no follow-up was done to ascertain exactly why the mentoring program failed, within a few months there was such a high drop-out rate among mentors that the program was discontinued. Finally, at *West Side High*, principal Ed Reynolds has found that when the students are too tough the mentors become burned out and drop out: "There's too much trauma. It's too draining."

Yet program directors are hesitant to rule out potential mentees, in part because so little is known about what can work with whom, and in part because of the egalitarian attitude that "mentoring has something in it for everyone." As Stanley Gleaton at *Harlem-Dowling* puts it, "If a kid is severely acting out, then maybe he needs temporary medication or a more restrictive setting. But some kids who act out might be helped by a one-to-one relationship they can call their own." Because so much is new in the field of mentoring, there is also a general fear among program directors that some students might be left out when there is no reason to do so. Discussing the *New York City Partnership's Career Mentoring Programs*, Sherri Dinacci says, "The idea of selecting out students really scares me. The school coordinators are probably conservative as it is. Especially when the mentors are corporate people, these coordinators can't help but want to choose students who make a good impression."

There are also concrete aspects about youths' lives that are thought to hinder or make possible a mentoring relationship. Sheila Turner of *Expanding Options for Teen Mothers* points out, "Many of our students are faced with so many issues, from foster care to homelessness, battering, and daycare needs for infants, that they simply can't complete the program." Because the students' domestic life has a critical effect on any mentoring relationship, having parents' cooperation is an important component to the program's success. Most programs demand consent from a parent or legal guardian for participation, several plan parent/mentor/mentee orientation receptions, and some ask that mentors make contact with parents early on in the relationship. "As I tell them, 'If you really like your

students a lot and want to take them somewhere later on, it'll be easier,'" says *Project Live's* Martha Cameron. "Also the parents won't be as likely to make dentist appointments on *Project Live* days if they've been brought in."

Of course, family cooperation is not always possible, particularly among youth from highly stressed families. In one program a young man is being mentored whose parents are totally against the intervention; as the interviewee explains, "It's just that the mentor has to know this. He has to know what he's in for." When the youth are of age to be in their own domestic arrangements, the cooperation of husbands or lovers can be key. At *Expanding Options for Teen Mothers*, a boyfriend who is unemployed and unprepared for a job may be a real obstacle: "Too often he's threatened by the woman's increased skills and education. He may fear that she can get on without him."

The material aspects of students' lives that affect their participation in the program are all important, particularly in school-linked programs. These include being able to walk home from school, living near public transportation, or having a telephone. A school simply cannot let students return much beyond the school hours if it is too difficult for them to get home. In addition, most program directors assume that if either mentors or mentees have to travel too far, the relationship will not form, much less survive. Many programs put the outside limit of travel for mentors at an hour, and there is usually an attempt to match the pair by geographic proximity. Similarly, some school-linked program will not choose youth without home phones. As an interviewee puts it, "Without a phone, their attendance is too hard to control."

Yet when all is said, program directors' reluctance to place limitations on which youth can be mentored seems justified. Again, not enough is known about where mentoring can do good, in part because we do not know all the things that mentoring can do, and in part because we do not know much about which kind of youth need which kind of mentors. Perhaps the best summation of the positive lesson from this uncertain state is the warning of one interviewee: "Don't start out with either a rigid notion of who benefits, or what works."

Mentees and Mentors -- Does Difference Make a Difference?

With notable exceptions such as the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program*, extensive or regular data is generally not collected on whom exactly the programs are serving. Although program directors can usually say, for example, that their students are largely nonwhite and poor, that their program serves children under the age of 12, or that their mentees are high school students, few have statistics on the exact ethnicity, age, or gender of the students they serve. Instead, there is the sense that the students they reach are "at risk," or "underachievers with potential," or youth who, "if they were from middle-class families, their parents would be providing them with what we give."

Similarly, data on the ethnicity, age, and gender of mentors is rarely collected, although program directors often make the global observation that "most of our mentors are nonwhite" or "it's easier to recruit women mentors than men." At the *New York Alliance for the Public Schools*, Leslie Mantrone describes the mentors in their Advertizing program as "concerned, white, professional people, generally not from New York or New York educated, who are curious about the city...[and] want to know about it and be a part of it all."

Although the national image of a mentoring pair is that of a white corporate executive and a African American or Hispanic student, when the relationships take place in New York, a significant proportion of the mentors clearly appear to be minorities--that is, ethnically not that different from their mentees. At the *New York City School Volunteer Program*, 52 percent of the volunteers are minority. And in the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program*, which draws its mentors from the city colleges, the ethnicity has almost been the same among mentors and mentees: 43 percent of the mentors are African American, compared to 56 percent of the mentees; and 28 percent of the mentors are Hispanic, compared to 25 percent of the mentees (Gregory & Strong, 1991). In fact, even in programs that draw on corporate executives for their mentors, minority employees appear to feel a greater responsibility to participate, and a much larger proportion of the mentors are minority than the demography of the corporation would suggest. As Leslie Mantrone points out, in the Engineering and Banking programs at the *New York Alliance*, people of color are more

inclined to participate as mentors. At a training session for the *Capital American Stock Exchange Career Mentoring Program*, of fourteen prospective mentors, nine were minorities.

From what the interviewees suggest, difference between mentors and mentees, whether in age, gender, ethnicity, or social class, is always in the air as an issue. However, whether it is seen as a benefit or an obstacle is a more complicated issue. Even the most apparently benign factor, age, appears to have an impact. A 1991 research report on the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* uncovered the fact that, whether the age difference between mentors and mentees was three years or forty years, it played a role.

> Mentors who were old enough to be parents, played the role of benevolent parents; and mentors who were closer in age, played the role of older, wiser friends. In the latter case, the pairs seemed to have more interests in common, which facilitated their finding things to do together. However, it is equally clear that mentoring relationships with older mentors worked quite well if that was what the mentee wanted and needed (Gregory & Strong, p.222, 223).

If age has a simple but potentially important effect, race or ethnicity is a more complicated variable--and one that is more difficult to discover the truth about, since where there is racial tension, people tend to resort to safe platitudes. In the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program*, where about half of all mentor/mentee pairs were the same ethnicity, only 19 percent of the mentors and 8 percent of the mentees said that having a mentor of the same race "mattered."

> The great majority of respondents felt that similarity in ethnicity was irrelevant to relationships, and some felt that differences actually enhanced the mentoring relationship both because they could learn about one another's differences, and because it could help to overcome personal prejudices by getting to know someone with a different background. The few dissenting opinions...felt that there were less hurdles to cross in developing a relationship with a person with a similar background. A few also argue in favor of mentors and mentees from the same ethnic background because mentors are then more obvious 'role models.' (Gregory & Strong, p. 221).

The idea that mentors can only be role models when they are the same race as the mentee is frequently expressed. The assumption here is that an African-American or Hispanic youth will be able to see that someone from their own background has made it up and out, whereas with a white mentor the success will seem more distant and abstract. For example, Frances Pena of Columbia University's *Double Discovery* argues,

> We don't see our mentors as role models, because most of our kids are black and Latino and the mentors are usually white. But they're there to show them a realistic view of the professional world and to help them with college applications and whatever else they need.

Susan Edgar, Executive Director of *New York City School Volunteer Program*, argues that when there are racial differences between volunteers and youth, starting with academics can help bridge the gap.

> So to the extent that special relations develop, they develop through that. This is on purpose, because it's very difficult for a volunteer and a student of different backgrounds to sit down and relate.

Yet because mentors are always in scarce supply relative to youth, the prevailing philosophy here as elsewhere appears to be pragmatic: Take what one can get and, when possible, match by whatever criteria (including racial similarity) might help.

Nevertheless, because New York is a city mired in racial sensitivities, as well as suspicions and defensiveness about prejudice, ethnic differences can be used to explain a program's failure. For instance, a director, describing a now defunct program, ended his interview by saying that the next time he tried to start up mentoring at his agency he would only have African-American mentors. Yet his conclusion for how to ensure future success went contrary to what he himself had described, since the one successful mentoring relationship he had pointed to with much pleasure was between a low-income African-American youth and "a preppy young white guy." In this case, both had loved sports, and this was the connection between them.

Differences in social background, or simply the era in which mentors and mentees were children, may also create large gaps in the mentors' and mentees' understanding of each other, even when they come from the same community. As an African-American mentor exclaims, "Mentoring is an eye-opener even for women like me who live and work in the black community." In some mentoring programs, such as the *New York Telephone Company's Mentoring Program*, there is a relatively narrow socioeconomic gaps between mentors and mentees. In others, such as the *Capital American Stock Exchange's Career Mentoring Program*, which draws its mentors from the executive class and its mentees from public high school students, there is an extreme social gap between mentors and mentees. Yet program directors translate the potential problem of social differences in wealth and position into racial terms, even when the mentors are minority.

Finally, differences may not always be discernible on the surface--in gender, skin color, or social class. Instead, deeply held values may have a greater effect than superficial differences on how the relationship proceeds. For example, mentors may be regular churchgoers and may feel uncomfortable about their mentees' irreligious feelings; or, conversely, mentors may be strongly rooted in secular thinking and find themselves put off by their mentees' religious faith. The African-American mentor cited above explains the difference in values between herself and her mentee:

> I grew up in the South, where lying and stealing...not that I'm such a good person, but you just didn't do it. We were poor, but being poor was different then. And I've had to adjust to a whole new world [in Harlem], and really face how bourgeois I am when I work with my mentee.

Although the goal of mentoring is to create change in the youth, often in the direction of more middle-class values, thoughtful mentors often speak of the importance of being "nonjudgmental" about the values of their mentees. What they mean by this is the importance of understanding the very different context in which the youth gain their sense of what is honorable, worthwhile, or fair. Nor can this nonjudgmental attitude be one-sided. As a mentor explains, "The mentees have to accept that you'll never be hip again!"

Thus, one might say that difference inevitably makes a difference, but that this difference is detrimental only when the mentor is insensitive to the youth's values and adaptive attitudes and behaviors. Conversely, difference can positively affect the relationship when it can be bridged through joint activities that gratify both the youth and the mentor; then both can learn that neither social nor personal difference is unbridgeable.

Recruiting, Selecting, and Matching Mentors and Mentees

Recruiting. The hard truth of mentoring is that there are more children and adolescents who could use mentors than there are mentors to help them. Potential mentees lie in wait of volunteers; moreover, in some programs that provide a variety of services, including a mentoring component, not all the youth actually receive mentors. *Classroom, Inc.*, which uses a computerized simulation game of the hospitality industry to teach business principles, has a mentoring component that is supposed to provide one mentor to every two students; however, so far there have not been enough volunteer mentors to give each student this aspect of the program. Because *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* does same-sex matching, and women mentors are much easier to recruit than men, the program always has a list of boys waiting to be mentored.

What programs have learned is that recruiting is easier when it is done through a voluntary organization, private firm, or public institution, which can bring in, say, a dozen more mentors than when it is done individually. Some programs, such as the *Black Achievers in Industry Mentoring Program,* have their own pool of mentors: in this case, a group of African-American Fortune 500 executives who are introduced to the program at an awards dinner. Social service organizations that run a variety of programs, such as *Big Brothers/Big Sisters, The Harlem-Dowling West Side Center for Children and Family Services,* or *The Children's Aid Society* report that their recruitment is comparatively easy, simply because they are old institutions with good reputations in the community. Yet even they admit to having children without mentors.

It should be noted, however, because of the important role that organizations play in recruiting mentors, the missions of organizations themselves sometimes give the mentoring

programs their particular characteristics. Programs linked to a corporation like Citibank are likely to be career-oriented and organized to improve the youths' academic skills, while programs with mentors from a voluntary organization such as the National Council of Jewish Women, for instance, are more recreational and more likely to foster ethnic identity and intercultural understanding.

Selecting. Most programs struggle to find a simple means of eliminating both inadequate or dangerous mentors and finding ones who will bring the youth and themselves enough gratification to stay in the program. When mentoring is conducted outside the safety of an institution, demanding references of mentors, doing legal checks, taking fingerprints, and creating an interview or screening process, all provide a way of weeding out adults who might harm the youth. As for a clue to potentially good mentors, past volunteer activities and experience with youth are commonly used. In some programs, the mentors are already known to the staff, and no further screening is deemed necessary. For example, mentors in *Expanding Options for Teen Mothers* were themselves teen mothers, are alumnae of the program who have found jobs in nontraditional fields, and are returning to give other young women what they have learned.

When corporate-based programs link with a pool of youth such as a college or an individual public school, the corporation generally recruits and selects its own mentors. For example, the *UNCF/Citibank Fellows Program* uses their corporate newsletter and referrals from current mentors to find willing mentors. Citibank's Daria Sheehan then asks for references and looks for individuals who have worked with youth, or at least have had some kind of community service.

However, in the more than 50 programs that formally operate through the New York City Public School System, an important distinction is made between recruiting and screening when it comes to mentors. While the corporations generally recruit their own mentors, the Board of Education has a specific policy concerning the conditions under which youth can relate to volunteers. Mentors need not go through a selection process if they and their mentee remain in the presence of a licensed school staff person, or work together at the

mentor's operating business office during business office. However, andy unsupervised activity, such as taking a walking tour of Wall Street, visiting a museum, or going out for dinner requires that volunteers to complete an extended screening process. This includes a completing a mentor application, providing references, being fingerprinted, receiving a TB test and clearance as TB-free, and attending a training session.

For most community service programs, choosing mentors is also an elaborate and serious process. This is particularly so where mentors are allowed a good deal of freedom in where they go and what they do with youth. *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* uses a screening method that includes a police check and references, as well as an interview that takes a detailed psychosocial history of the mentor (including family, educational background, work history, intimate and platonic relationships, and values); in addition, detailed information is taken from both the mentee and the parents of the mentee. At the *Harlem-Dowling West Side Center for Children and Family Services*, where the participating children are wards of the state, choosing and preparing mentors are combined in a careful process of several stages. Volunteers attend a series of orientation and training meetings, which make increasingly clear both how much they are interested in volunteering and what they can do best. First, there is an orientation session for anyone thinking of volunteering as a tutor, a one-to-one mentor, or a family mentor. During this meeting the types of children the agency serves are described, and there is often a speaker on specific topics: child abuse, adolescent development, or the black male child, for example. At the end of this session volunteers fill out applications, including the Central State Registration Form, which allows the agency to check on abuse or neglect charges. An individual interview is also scheduled with Stanley Gleaton, Executive Director of Volunteer Services. Then, a meeting is held, which includes the child, the volunteer, the parent, the caseworker, and Gleaton. In this meeting the group also breaks up so that the volunteer can meet alone with the case worker, the parent, and the child. Finally, the volunteers can attend monthly meetings, which offer them an opportunity to discuss their experiences and hear speakers.

Matching. With notable exceptions, matching is a relatively informal process in the various New York City mentoring programs studied. Many groups, operating somewhat on the principle of dating services, work with the questionnaires that both mentors and mentees fill out. Besides offering information on age, gender, ethnicity, and place of residence, these questionnaires stress interests, hobbies, and goals. However, because the mentor and the youth generally answer quite different questionnaires, the sense of who is appropriate for whom is probably very much an idiosyncratic decision of the matchmaker. For example, in one program, mentors are asked such questions as, "what cultural/creative/social activities" they enjoy, and "who is a role model" for them. At the same time, the student profile contains such items as, "my favorite music, my favorite TV show, my favorite sport, my best subject in school," and so forth. Even if a questionnaire can help the program director intuitively come up with a match, it is clear that matches can seem perfect on paper, only to turn out to be a real disappointment. In fact, far more subtle characteristics than a shared love of sports may be why relationships flourish or falter. These more elusive characteristics might include caretaking or nurturing styles, energy levels, conservatism as opposed to the wish for adventure and exploration, or rigidity versus a tolerance for ambiguity and conflict on the part of both mentors and mentees.

Because of the obvious clumsiness of questionnaires in electing the elusive characteristics that are part of good matches, some programs also try to build in as much contact as possible early on between mentors, mentees and those who are responsible for the matching. For example, *The New York City Mentoring Program* insists that school coordinators be present during the mentor training and--when possible--that the business coordinators be present during the mentee orientation. *The CUNY Student Mentor Program* creates a pairing process over the first, pre-pairing phase of its program. Five joint mentor/mentee meetings are held at the host college for the students to get to know each other informally. The high school and college coordinators use the profile forms for both groups and observe the informal pairings that occur during these meetings. A week before the pairing event, the mentees are asked to choose three mentors they would like to be paired

with. Thus the coordinators can either accommodate mentees' choices, or intervene to help a mentee select the best match.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAMS

In this section, we discuss several organizational aspects of the programs, including how mentors are trained for mentoring and supported in their role during the relationship; how often and how long the relationship is structured to take place; what mentors and youth are told to do with each other and where; and which problems lead mentors and mentees to drop out. All these organizational issues distinguish planned mentoring programs from natural mentoring relationships. In contrast to the latter, these planned programs maintain policies and practices that support the mentoring relationships.

Orientation and Training

All the programs surveyed regard themselves as having some form of training for mentors, and most say they have some orientation or training for the mentees. However, in part because of funding constraints, and in part because program directors are afraid that volunteers will lose interest, orientation and training are usually rather superficial. Among the more comprehensive are that of *Harlem-Dowling's*, (which was described earlier) and *Big Brothers/Big Sisters*, which offers a well-planned curriculum, including such topics as stages of child and adolescent development, communication, role clarification, cultural and ethnic considerations, child abuse prevention, and planning match activities--all provided during several meetings of a few hours each. The *New York City School Volunteer Program* provides its volunteer tutors with ten-to-twelve hours of "preservice training," and its eighteen-member field staff provides in-service support in the form of materials, problem-solving advice, working out scheduling difficulties, and special workshops.

For most programs, however, the training is simpler and more informal. Most common is a get-together--sometimes for mentors and mentees at the same time--in which mentoring is defined, some goals are suggested, a few tidbits of advice are dispensed (say, on building trust, being a good listener, or overcoming difference), and there may be some

role-playing. The *Black Achievers in Industry Mentoring Program* offers an orientation program for both mentors and mentees, during which they obtain information about the program and their responsibilities to each other. The youth actually meet their mentors at a second get-together, called a Linkage Luncheon.

The New York City Partnership's Career Mentoring Program offers a training and orientation program that can be done in four hours, or two hours each on two consecutive days. The program asks prospective mentors to think about who has been a mentor in their life, and how they themselves have benefitted from mentoring. Other issues such as setting goals and problem solving are also discussed. A similar form concerning goal setting is given to prospective mentees by the school coordinator. When the pairs finally get together, one of their first activities is to work with a clean goal-setting sheet to develop a set of at least four mutual goals. Yet setting these goals is not to structure activities tightly, but rather to help break the ice by providing the pairs initial direction. "It's something to do in the getting-to-know-you stage," suggests mentoring coordinator, Sherri Dinacci. But some program directors question how much these training formats can help a new mentor, particularly when the mentee is an at-risk student. As the principal of a difficult school that has a mentoring program says, the beginning of a mentoring relationship with one of his students is usually a "baptism by fire."

Clearly, program directors face a dilemma in designing any training: how to impart to prospective mentors essential information about the youth and the mentoring experience rapidly but without emphasizing problems that may discourage them from undertaking the relationship. A training regimen that is too long or too intense may also simply turn the volunteers off--or so most program heads fear. Thus the training tends to be limited to the most obvious practical problems: What if the mentee does not show up? or, What if the mentee expects the mentor to act as a sugar daddy? Answers are in the form of reassurance that one can express hurt at being stood up, or be honest about not wanting to give the mentee money.

Of all the programs, only the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* actually offers coursework and academic credit for mentoring. In various colleges throughout the CUNY

system, mentoring is structured into the curriculum through such courses as educational psychology, the sociology of urban education, fieldwork in child and adolescent development, and mentoring internships. This ensures that ongoing training takes place within the semester's weekly college classes, a benefit that it is difficult to provide in other contexts. In addition, the new mentoring program currently piloted is itself highly structured, with a curriculum that offers weekly issues for discussion between mentors and mentees. Finally, the CUNY model provides multiple levels of continuous support, from coordinators, from peer groups, and from weekly mentor/mentee get-togethers. Although the mentoring causes are electives, the fact that mentors receive academic credit for being a mentor does change the incentives and rewards of mentoring, for the mentor is no longer merely a volunteer doing community service out of a sense of civic responsibility.

Monitoring and Ongoing Support

It is safe to say that a difficult and critical issue for all mentoring programs is keeping in touch with what goes on between mentors and mentees. As Ann Ensinger of *New York City Mentoring Program* puts it, "It's very important not just to say, go and have a nice time, I'll see you in June." Yet the monitoring varies greatly in New York City's mentoring programs, from no required reporting system, or random calls made by overworked project directors, or even contact sheets to be turned in by mentors and mentees at the end of the relationship, to regular staff contact with mentors and youth. Several programs monitor the relationship between mentor and mentee as it develops, as a way of also providing ongoing support. In some programs, monthly phone calls are made to all mentors. At *Big Brothers/Big Sisters,* where the pairs meet every other week, both the volunteer and the child's parents are asked to call the social worker after each session for the first three months. After that, both volunteer and parents are asked to call the social worker once a month. Although it is difficult to get both volunteers and parents to fulfill this part of the arrangement, Trish Kerle describes the importance of these calls:

> What you want from them is: what they're doing, the development of the relationship, how both are feeling about it, any problems that come up, how effective is the communication, is it meeting the child's needs.

The New York City Partnership has begun mailing quarterly participant survey forms to all mentors in its *Career Mentoring Programs* around the city. This form asks the mentors to recall whether each meeting was one-to-one, group, a telephone contact, a missed contact, and so on. In addition, mentors are asked to tabulate how many times they meet their mentees at the high school and the workplace, whether the advice was on academic matters, school subjects, or careers, or whether they attended a cultural activity. Since the forms are filled out retroactively, there may be some missed reporting, and Sherri Dinacci is considering giving out the forms at the training sessions. However, even when program directors spend a good deal of effort on monitoring the course of the relationship, some effort to stay in contact rests with the mentors and mentees. In fact, keeping track of mentor/mentee pairs can be a frustrating task. As one interviewee reports, "They say, 'We're going to stay in touch,' but they don't, and we don't have the manpower to track them down."

Most programs try to schedule some kind of group activities in which mentors, mentees, and coordinators meet in larger groups. This is a way of following the mentoring pairs, as well as helping them meet each other. It is common, for example, for programs to have parties for both mentors and mentees, as well as for frontline staff, at Christmas and at the end of the year. Some school programs also hold regular meetings between mentees and the school coordinator. While these meetings do not directly involve the mentor, they give the school coordinator a chance to discover what is happening in the relationship, as well as to reinforce its goals, and coordinators usually speak to mentors subsequently when there is a problem. Both the old and the redesigned *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program*, for example, schedules weekly meetings between the mentored students and their school coordinator as well as regular mentor/mentee get-togethers.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that neither training nor support for mentors and youth is more than rudimentary in most programs. First, as stated earlier, there is fear of

overloading the volunteer mentors at the start. Second, knowledge about how to conduct effective mentor training is still scant and not well grounded. Finally, mentoring programs are characteristically understaffed, and even if volunteers would be willing to go through more preservice training or commit themselves to more regular in-service training, there is still the problem of who would deliver this assistance.

Some program directors, however, are clear that there are both knowledge and skills that would enable mentors to do their jobs better. Over and over, interviewees mention that the main problem for mentors is knowing what to do with their mentees. As Martha Cameron at *Project LIVE* puts it,

> Volunteers require a lot of structure, feedback, and support. They are good at their jobs, but they often feel inadequate with kids. They need you to say they're doing well, or they should do this or that.

In fact, some programs spend a good deal of effort sending out newsletters with suggested activities and even offering free tickets to events. Despite the fact that *CUNY/BOE* mentors receive formal training, a 1991 evaluation of the old model suggested that mentors need more help in a number of areas--including managing time, motivating the mentee, engaging the mentee's interest, and deciding what to do.

Reflections on Frequency and Duration

The programs we surveyed vary considerably in the frequency of the contact between mentors and youth, as well as in the duration of their relationships. Moreover, practicality, rather than the youth's needs, tend to determine this variation. As a handout from Columbia University's *Talent Search* reassures its future volunteers: "Mentoring is truly useful when it is ongoing. It need not be daily or weekly; monthly or bi-monthly will do just fine." In other words, an overarching goal of most programs is to have "successfully completed relationships," within the confines of mentors' and youths' availability and schedules.

Some mentoring is both intensive and long lasting. Over the past six years, the *I Have a Dream* project has offered its students both after-school and Saturday activities,

individual youth mentors, and long-standing relationships with both an on-site coordinator and the adult founder-mentors, Arlene and Reuben Mark, who see them every week. *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* asks the mentors for a commitment of four hours every other week--recently decreased from weekly contact, which was too hard to enforce--over a period of at least a year, and preferably two to three years. Similarly, *Project LIVE* involves two hours of weekly contact between mentors and mentees for two years.

Among the projects that require fewer contacts but over a longer period of time is the *UNCF/Citibank Fellows Program*, which asks only that the mentors and college-level mentees make phone contact with each other twice a month, though over the entire college span of four years. Conversely, *The New York Telephone Company's Mentoring Program* at Theodore Roosevelt High School is only a semester-long program, but on alternate weeks students spend every day riding around a phone truck with their mentor, a telephone repair person. The *Harlem-Dowling* program demands an afternoon a month from the mentors for a six-month period (mentors actually go to the children's homes and pick up their mentees), but most relationships that catch on last beyond the six months. *The CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* has been of even a shorter duration, lasting only a semester, but the mentoring pairs meet once a week for one-and-a-half to two hours. (In the revised program, piloted this year, individual students will be mentored for two successive years, but by two different mentors.) However, Eadie Shanker makes the interesting point that both the old and the redesigned programs allow for a "mentoring environment" that goes beyond the relationship. Finally, *Expanding Options for Teen Mothers* commits mentors to a series of presentations to a group of fifteen adolescent girls, but the mentors are also asked to make their phone numbers available to students in order to continue sharing information.

Some programs boast impressive longevity on the part of their volunteers. For example, of a sample of 379 volunteers who replied to the *New York City School Volunteers Program* survey, 19 percent had been a school volunteer for six or more years, and 20 percent for three-to-five years--though not necessarily to the same students. Although *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* only requires that matches last for a year, the average length is two to

three years. *Project LIVE*, which asks for a two-year commitment by its corporate mentors, has had an extremely low attrition--the only dropouts being those mentors who changed jobs.

Yet programs do have problems with attrition, by both youth and volunteers. School-based mentoring programs usually stop at the end of the year, or even the semester, because of the difficulty of maintaining the youth group over the summer, or even when schedules change. In New York City, accounting for a high student mobility rate is generally part of all planning. The *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program's* "Head Start for College Continuum" is designed to be a transition program between junior high and senior high, spanning the eighth and ninth grades, with a summer institute in between. However, because the project designers expect to lose a third of their students by the ninth grade, they will oversubscribe mentees in the first phase. At the same time, since mentoring is integrated into a number of courses throughout the CUNY system, nearly all the mentors in the program will be replaced in the second year. Although it is possible to get a year-long course that includes a mentoring internship, it is nearly impossible for colleges to design a two-year sequence with credit for mentoring.

When and Where to Meet

In the early years of mentoring programs, pairs were generally assigned to each other and the details of when and where to meet and what to do were left to the mentor and the youth. It was assumed that such decisions would arise naturally, out of their mutual interests. A number of long-standing programs that involve a good deal of supervision, such as *I Have a Dream* or *Big Brothers/Big Sisters*, still follow this method. For two reasons, however, a number of programs are now more explicit about when and where their mentoring pairs should meet. The first is the fear, so common in large urban areas, that some abuse will occur within the relationship. As one director exclaimed, "In the beginning, we had mentees staying at their mentors house overnight! My God!, we couldn't have that." Several mentoring programs now require that mentor/mentee pairs meet only in public places. The second is that when mentoring pairs have the freedom to schedule their meetings, both mentors and mentees also have the freedom *not* to schedule, or even not to

show up for their appointments. As the director of a now defunct community center-based program laments,

> The mentors often came late. They'd call to say they were tied up at work and were going to be late, but the kids got restless. When the mentors finally got there, they were discouraged that the kids had left. With kids, you gotta wait for them.

Obviously, whatever discouragement missed meetings by mentees arouse in the mentors, their own failure to be consistent is a greater problem for the youth. As *Harlem-Dowling's* Stanley Gleaton admits, "A lot of our kids look forward to the mentors coming and taking them out. And the reason consistency is so important is that they've already had a lot of people in and out of their lives."

Because of potential abuse within the relationship, and the deterioration of relationships through missed appointments, several programs now schedule meetings between mentors and mentees at preassigned places. For example, *Project LIVE* has corporate-based tutoring programs at several major corporations to which students from junior high schools are bussed one afternoon a week. At the corporation, they spend two hours with their tutors: an hour of this time is supposed to be on tutoring, a second hour on the world of work. In fact, *Project LIVE* provides an interesting possibility for analyzing the strengths of a program where both mentor and mentee are captive audiences, in contrast to one where at least one member of the pair has distractions or responsibilities that work against showing up. In addition to its corporate-based programs, the Children's Aid Society runs a similar program at its Dunlevy Milbank Community Center. Here, although the students are in a community center in their own neighborhood, they arrive about an hour before the volunteers, so there is more chance that either the mentor will not show up, or that the youth will leave early.

Dropping Out

Commitment to the building of the relationship is said to be essential for both mentors and youth because the prospect of either party dropping out looms large in every program.

Stanley Gleaton of *Harlem-Dowling* makes clear how, from a program director's viewpoint, dropouts come from both sides of the fence.

> I can't fire the mentors, so when they don't live up to their commitment, I have no recourse. Also I have no control over children acting out. Once a child acted out so badly that the mentor brought him back saying, 'I can't deal with this.' A lot of our mentors are professional people who come from different backgrounds from our children. I have no control over the feelings that arise. I'd like to make everyone comfortable. I just can't.

Most programs try to have a backup system to handle the problem of mentors dropping out. At the *New York City School Volunteer Program* mentors who must drop out are instructed to tell the teacher with whom they work, and she or he finds a new volunteer for the student. *Project Live* uses a buddy system of linked pairs of mentors and mentees so that when a mentor is absent or drops out the mentee is taken over by his or her other mentor. Nevertheless, Martha Cameron points out, "When a tutor is absent a lot, it does start a cycle of student absenteeism." Moreover, because of the scarcity of mentors in relation to mentees in most programs, it is difficult to have a foolproof backup system. This is particularly so in a period of economic decline, when there are continual layoffs in both the corporate and public spheres. While corporate programs often ensure continuity by giving the mentors release time for mentoring, layoffs and transfers have hit these programs especially hard, particularly in programs in which the mentoring occurs at the workplace. For example, at *Classroom, Inc.*, although a woman who was no longer with her company wanted to continue working with her mentee, the program structure could not accommodate her, since mentors see their mentees at their corporate offices.

Yet the problem of mentor dropouts is obviously not just one of ensuring a backup system, or of creating other administrative solutions. The programs must also face the disappointment of the youth when a mentor disappears. Stanley Gleaton at *Harlem-Dowling* describes the problem this way: "Our clients are often fragile. They've already had so many disappointments in their lives. So many people have made them false promises." Yet exactly because the youth are often defensive, fearing hurt in new ties, they can seem

indifferent or uncaring to their mentors, and they can put their mentors through exasperating tests--finally trying their sense of commitment to its limits. This is part of what the mentor training and support systems try to protect against. As an interviewee puts it, "We try to troubleshoot ahead of time so exactly this doesn't happen." And when the mentors do leave, either because the tests have been too great, or because of conflicting commitments, the youth must somehow be helped to start again.

MENTORING IN CONTEXT

Mentoring, as we have studied it, is not a chance connection between two individuals, but rather a relationship that is planned and often structured. Thus, the mentoring pair develops a relationship with the help of other individuals who operate to support it, as well as within institutions, which can help or not help to sustain it. Contact with paid staff, receipt of other services, and the continuity of the program itself all influence how, and even whether, the mentoring takes place. The embeddedness of the relationship is an important characteristic of planned mentoring, and one which deserves much more research.

Staffing and Institutionalization

Mentoring programs in New York City vary greatly in the amount of staff available to support their mentoring effort. In programs like the *United Negro College Fund/Citibank Fellows Program* or the *Black Achievers in Industry Mentoring Program*, a single coordinator does what she can to recruit, match, and orient some eighty mentor/mentee pairs and keep in touch with them over the period of their relationship. By contrast, a program like *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* has an executive director, a program director, a director of community education services, a fund-development director, and five case workers--each of whom handle forty matches. Obviously, the amount of staff available determines the amount and kinds of support that can be given to mentoring pairs. *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* is known for having one of the most seriously thought-out systems; yet, describing their staffing pattern, Trish Kerle, the community education services director, calls it, "the bare bones for what one needs for it to work."

In school-based programs such as *New York Mentor* or the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program*, a number of paid, school coordinators make the programs work. These part-time staff members support the mentoring pairs and have a much closer day-to-day knowledge of what is going on in the relationships than do the central office program staff.

In general, the programs surveyed suggest that those programs that are the most likely to sustain themselves are those that are institutionalized, or are embedded in larger organizations. Among the programs on which the *School and Business Alliance (SABA)* collected information, of those that had ceased to exist by the time of our study, most were small, church or community projects. They were the vision and effort of a single individual, but had not become institutionalized by funding and by a staff member devoted to the effort. By contrast, all the *SABA* mentoring programs that were still viable had at least one paid individual at the helm, and a funded and worked-out structure in which the mentoring proceeded. The large mentoring programs like *Big Brothers/Big Sisters, New York City Mentoring, Career Mentoring, CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program,* and *The Children's Aid Society's Project LIVE* all have substantial staffs available to mentoring pairs, as well as access to such services as counseling and health that can support the mentoring.

Are Mentees Getting Other Services?

Youth mentoring programs generally see themselves as serving youth from homes where either resources or care is missing. Arlene Mark of *I Have a Dream* speaks of giving these youth "a patchwork of pieces," including tutoring, health services, cultural enrichment, and mentoring, to make up for what they lack. This is possible today because most schools, settlement houses, churches, and community agencies offer a wide variety of services for youth. Yet, however effectively some agencies bring youth what they need, they rarely coordinate these services with those provided by other agencies or by the public schools. In fact, a lack of coordination in services offered to students is a particular problem within the public schools. As a recent study of dropout prevention programs in New York City suggests, even when services are meant to be given in conjunction with each other, few

students actually receive all of the services, in part because by distributing the available services, more students can be reported as receiving them (Grannis, and Riehl, 1991).

Because mentoring as an intervention is generally run by a group outside the school, the problem of coordination of services within the school is particularly acute. Mentoring is rarely linked to services that students may already be receiving. In our sample, no interviewee included among their selection criteria that the youth either be, or not be, receiving other services. Moreover, none of student selection forms given to liaison teachers and counselors includes a space for saying what other programs the student may be in. According to Eadie Shanker, of students in the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program*:

> It's likely that they're getting other services--they're disadvantaged minority students. And the guidance counselor, assistant principal, and teacher, who are supposed to be on the selection team, are probably aware of the services the kids are getting, and whether they'd benefit from the addition of mentoring. I think they'd probably talk about this. It would make sense.

Yet other interviewees speak of the isolation of the school coordinator from others who might have access to students' files. Moreover, whether or not school professionals believe in loading up on some students, or spreading out services so that more students can get something, probably varies widely; it may be more a product of how their record-keeping systems work than of students' needs. This means that prospective mentees may be receiving multiple services, most of which are not coordinated with others, or receiving none at all. Because we simply do not know what other supports students are receiving, we cannot answer the important question of whether mentoring works best for some students when combined with other interventions, and who these students would be.

Organizing and Funding Mentoring

The difficulty of collaboration among corporations, agencies, community organizations, and schools can loom over the mentoring it is supposed to enable, overshadowing for staff the problems of working out fragile mentoring relationships. For example, according to Susan Edgar at the *New York City School Volunteers Program*, it has

taken some time and effort to decrease principals' and teachers' defensiveness about what "only professionals can do," and to build the schools' capacity to use volunteers effectively. In addition, several interviewees complain about corporations having their own view of the appropriate length of the program or of the amount of orientation/training mentors should have. Says one interviewee, "There's still a myth that corporate folks don't need to be trained. We were approached by a corporation who didn't want us to do any training!" And another interviewee confesses, "I've seen a program disintegrate before my eyes because of the corporate coordinator's negligence. The tutors have to have someone in the corporation to whom they're responsible, not our agency."

Few mentoring programs are fully planned in advance. Despite the great variety of programs in New York City, only a handful appear to have arisen out of a careful assessment of what the targeted children and youth need. Instead, most programs have been prompted by fashions and funding possibilities. As one interviewee admits, "There are a lot of programs that wouldn't be called mentoring if it weren't that this is what money is now for." Of all the programs in the surveyed, only two, *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* and *Project LIVE*, predate the 1980s. The *New York City Mentoring Program* began in the 1983-84 school year. In fact, most mentoring programs are less than two years old. Although *Double Discovery* at Columbia University is over a decade old, mentoring was only added this year.

Not surprisingly, program developers often show a quiet genius in designing components based on monies from disparate sources. For example, the new *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* uses two kinds of money--one earmarked for a summer institute and the other designated for mentoring--to create a two-year mentoring program with a summer institute in between. But, in general, the programs we surveyed are all operating on limited funds, and many have faced cutbacks over the last year or more. Even in large agencies, mentoring can be a program with no funding whatsoever, one that exists only because an agency member adds this task to his or her responsibilities. Yet when funds are cut, the paid staff is sacrificed and existing staff are left with increased responsibilities. What this means is fewer resources for training and oversight. Curtailed budgets, however, can limit more than training and supervision. An even more extreme constraint comes in an interviewee's

description of waiting for money to buy students' tokens so that they could be taken on visits to work places.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

In a period of tight budgets, unless the funders themselves specify the need for evaluations, program heads place scarce resources into sustaining programs rather than evaluating them. Most restrict their evaluations to record keeping on the frequency and length of contacts, or to questionnaires sent out at the end of the program to understand its effects.

When questionnaires or informal responses are used to assess the program's success, the feedback is generally positive. Program directors are told by school staff that the students have grown, have become less shy and more responsible, and their grades are improving. And alumni mentees who keep in touch are also enthusiastic. As Daria Sheehan says of her student alumni survey: "Those who responded were very positive. They said things like, 'A real friend, icing on the cake of the scholarship; it means a lot.'" But, as with any survey, the people who do not bother to respond are those whose silence threatens any generalizations.

Many program directors also speak of wanting to affect their participants' lives "in ways which are difficult to measure." As Sheila Turner of *Expanding Options for Teen Mothers* complains, "The performance-based contracts [we're forced to use] only want numbers. They don't deal with the realities these women are faced with, like battering, homelessness, and so on. They only want to hear of the successes, not the constraints." And the mission statement of *United Negro College Fund/Citicorp Fellows Program* speaks of the long-term effects of mentoring which no questionnaire can elicit:

> Will they remember and appreciate all through their lives and careers the advice they received from the mentoring process? Will the mentors be able to open doors and present options not thought of by the students, or move the students along more quickly toward goals they've already set for themselves?

> Can the mentors help students build confidence to pursue ambitious life and career goals?

On the other hand, most program directors have a strong conviction about the observable benefits of involvement in their program, both for the youth and for the mentors. "Positive academic outcomes? We expect them by now," as one interviewee asserts. This conviction about the benefits of the program is often the result of observation and conversations. Program directors are quick to notice changes in the youth they serve. And there are impressive statistics out there: such as, in 1990-1991, the top six elected leaders at Brandeis High School were all students who had been matched with IBM mentors.

Several program directors also speak of an interesting positive side effect from their mentoring programs--increased understanding of minority children and the schools that serve them. For example, Susan Edgar at the *New York City School Volunteer Program* points out that sending volunteers into schools increases public support for them.

> You get community members who see kids who are eager to learn, and that's not an image we get in the press. You see teachers who are working very hard, and principals who are working hard, and so you create public awareness that has a lot of potential for advocacy. The volunteers are ready to go to bat for these kids.

Nevertheless, of the programs surveyed, only *Project LIVE, The CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program,* and *New York City School Volunteers Program, Inc.* have had formal evaluations by outsiders. In the case of CUNY, the evaluations are mandated by the legislature as annual occurrences. However, because of their expense, most evaluations are generally one-time events, not annual processes used to make adjustments and guide the program. Like most program evaluations, they are generally done specifically to generate funding, which puts a constraint on ferreting out problems. The evaluation for the *New York City School Volunteers Program* was done by a marketing consultant.

Not surprisingly, all these evaluations show positive results. For example, the 1990-1991 *New York City School Volunteer Program* evaluation found that the tutored students

made significant progress in reading and math, as judged by both teachers and volunteers. Both groups surveyed also judged that students improved their self-confidence and their attitude toward school (Klein, 1991). Seventh- and eighth-grade students in *Project LIVE* (who begin the program two to three years behind in reading levels) were found to have better school persistence than the general school population: their dropout rate of 9.0 percent is much lower than the 32.5 percent among adolescents in the general population (Children's Aid Society, 1986).

Because mentoring attempts to change the whole child, evaluations that focus on grade point averages, and even academic persistence, only scratch the surface of the potential benefits of the relationship. Thus it is unfortunate that in a period of national concern with school improvement, the consequences of mentoring are likely to be narrowed to school success. These are also the easiest consequences to measure, because we already have available a record-keeping mechanism for such things as test scores, grade averages, and attendance rates.

But successful mentoring can really only be measured over time: by how efficiently the mentees move towards their own educational goals, as well as toward career and personal goals that they may not reach for a dozen years or more after they have been mentored. Yet it is this kind of a change that mentoring seeks to make, and so this level of effect must be measured. To know whether mentoring enhances youths' life chances, far more thought and money will have to be spent on evaluation than is currently the case.

CHAPTER 3
A LONGER LOOK AT MENTORING

The New York City programs we surveyed are evidence of a surge of enthusiasm for mentoring. This enthusiasm remains alive and growing, despite budget constraints and the problems of institutionalizing mentoring in schools, agencies, corporations, and the community. Most programs exist because of the energy and commitment of one or two people, who ingeniously bundle limited resources and make expedient decisions to keep their programs running.

For the program directors we interviewed, mentoring is a caring but diffuse intervention, with a variety of far-ranging personal, academic, and career goals. Although our interviewees consider mentoring a "one-to-one" intervention, they often compromise this ratio in the face of the persistent scarcity of mentors. Moreover, because mentors are always in short supply, program directors generally greet volunteers with gratefulness and high expectations. Program directors use a rudimentary definition of a "good mentor," which is based largely on their common sense understanding about what leads to success in any good leader, manager, or human service worker. Similarly, their idea of good mentoring remains at a rather undeveloped stage. Even trying to describe which youth need mentoring, or who make the best mentees, is largely avoided in part, because of an egalitarian ethos which suggests that every youth in our nation should be mentored, and in part, because many programs take whatever youth they can get--with little control over who these youth might be. The assumption is that youth will be helped by the relationship, so long as it is caring and regular, and somehow meets the youths' needs.

As a program, mentoring has generally been an institutional guest, accommodating itself to bureaucracies and fitting into other people's schedules. Not surprisingly, then, the New York City institution that has had the greatest impact on structuring when, where, and

for how long mentors meet with youth is the public schools. In many programs, the public schools have also been a source of mentees, and school personnel have become a paid or unpaid part of the mentoring program staff, taking on the burden of student selection, program support, and even evaluation.

Although some of the school-based programs are probably among the most stable mentoring programs in New York City, they nevertheless embody the frailties of a volunteer-based intervention. Within the schools, mentoring can be highly bureaucratic, while remaining marginal and unintegrated with other programs and services. Ironically, this is not because of the volunteerism inherent in mentoring, but because mentoring programs, like so much that goes on in the public schools, are add-ons, with little coordination.

A look at New York City mentoring in action presents a rich set of experiences for understanding how mentoring programs actually function. At the same time, the programs make clear that certain issues need to be addressed concerning research, practice, and public policy, if the targeted youth are to benefit from mentoring efforts.

Mentoring cannot go on without being institutionalized through legal mandates, public policies, and regular funding sources.

Mentoring has taken hold in New York City, as it has throughout the United States, as a populist strategy without any government mandate. Even though many mentoring programs are conducted through the schools, mentoring is neither a legally required service like compensatory education or special education; nor are school officials, at any level, accountable for its outcome. In New York City, however, a local capacity is in place for maintaining mentoring programs. Community organizations, social service agencies, corporations, and foundations all offer volunteer mentors, consultant expertise and training, and/or financial support. Unfortunately, this ad hoc arrangement is fragile. What is strong is the will--the motivation, beliefs, and attitudes--of many mentoring practitioners to keep the programs going. These practitioners and other supporters of mentoring see the intervention as a viable new youth service and a socially responsive effort to help youth develop for their own and society's well-being.

Mentoring has also been largely ignored in current public policy debates by educational reformers. Although it is gradually becoming a component of the federal Chapter 1 programs, this has been done without a clear analysis of its role in the programs. Moreover, formal education and youth programs are separate public policy issues in the United States. Even the call for educating the whole child--the broadest meaning of education--is often merely the rhetorical flourish of educational policy makers, because there are few laws, mandates, functional bureaucracies, or funds for implementing such policies. But if planned mentoring is to survive its infancy and show its efficacy even as a volunteer strategy, policies will have to be framed to give it meaning and stability within the panoply of services offered youth.

Benchmarks should be created for mentoring programs and practices.

Youth mentoring today is largely a planned one-to-one relationship between individuals of different ages, races and, social classes. Yet in the actual programs we encountered, the variety of solutions to the issues of identifying volunteers and youth, planning activities, setting goals, and creating the intensity and length of the relationship are enormous. The older person may be a college student, the help may be tutoring, the telephone may be the instrument, and the relationship may last as little as six months. It is all still mentoring.

The New York City experience suggests that people running mentoring programs are pragmatic. They use available community resources: funds, pools of mentors, sites, and so forth. Even the youth who might profit from mentoring come from whatever source is willing to supply them. In their pragmatism, mentoring practitioners ideally capture the spirit of mentoring by using every available resource to give the youth what he or she *personally* needs-- without being fastidious about how this is done. These practitioners share the national ideal voiced by many public officials of "a mentor for every youth." That this may be achievable only through group activities and occasional personal contacts, rather than a idealized personal relationship, does not dampen their enthusiasm and commitment.

But pragmatism and expediency can be dangerous if the programs operate without standards. Even if we define mentoring relationships to mean personal help or care under a wide variety of conditions, as some mentoring professionals do, standards still must be developed for the frequency and duration of the care and help. There must also be a sense of the limits of the term. (Under what conditions is tutoring mentoring? When is lecturing mentoring? Do occasional group visits to a place of business constitute mentoring?). Moreover, we need to delineate whether different youth demand different caretaking styles, especially when the mentoring is aimed at the whole child, rather than at simply fostering academic preparedness or career awareness. These are not hairsplitting issues. Without standards, practitioners cannot select youth and mentors, or propose activities for them; program evaluators will not know what program effects to find from the mentoring; and public officials will not know whether to support mentoring as a new education and training strategy, like a youth apprenticeship, or as a volunteer social service.

Having benchmarks will help local programs set standards. Benchmarking in corporations is a method of determining the best way of carrying out a part of the production process, such as inventory or shipping. Benchmarking does not present a whole program for imitation, but shows how an operation or activity common to all programs, regardless of their diversity, can be executed well. Thus, benchmarks still leave a great deal to local solutions. In fact, local conditions always shape local programs, even when they are part of networks or run by large community and youth organizations. Moreover, local programs should continue to develop their own goals, including those for training, orientation, and follow-up; for determining the level of performance they expect from the mentors, youth, and staff; and, very importantly, for deciding what the youth and mentor can achieve through the mentoring.

In fact, a puzzle as well as a source of strength in programs aimed at high-risk youth has been that, even when the program design remains the same, some sites do better than others. In Project RAISE and Career Beginnings, two evaluated programs, mentoring at only some sites produced any effects (Cave & Quint, 1990; McPartland & Nettles, 1991).

This suggests that not only the design of the intervention, but also the organization and management of the program, determines how it will affect the youth.

Of course, there is always a danger that trying to regularize programs with standards, benchmarks, and exemplary models will reduce mentoring to a technical apparatus, rather than a human encounter. Our experience in New York City suggests that the best programs are not necessarily those with the most elaborate structure. Nevertheless, letting the programs take their own expedient course is also a bleak prospect for the future of mentoring. To ground mentoring in standards does not unduly harness it.

Efforts need to be made to better conceptualize which youth can be most helped by mentoring, and under what conditions.

Mentoring programs in New York City, as elsewhere, generally aim their services at two kinds of youth. First, there are those who simply lack middle-class resources, such as tutoring or special enrichments, but because their needs are not severe, they are often overlooked when special services are delivered. These youth are either average students or are considered underachievers. Some have home problems, but their attendance records are good, and they have no significant school or delinquency problems. They are also viewed as motivated, although this motivation likely needs to be nurtured. These youth look like the working poor or the immigrants of the early part of the twentieth century. We think they have character, and since they do not make excessive demands on us, they do not seem to need more than mentoring can provide. The youth in this group mostly need opportunities and environmental enrichments that will increase their academic achievement, expand their career aspirations and opportunities, and give them a better chance at life than their families have had. Mentoring these youth, many believe, brings a good return on the investment. They also make good ambassadors for the schools or agencies.

In the second group are those youth generally considered at risk. In school-based programs, these youth are often considered too aggressive, withdrawn, or involved in their community subculture to form an interpersonal relationship with a middle-class outsider. However, social agencies, churches, and community centers work with these youth in a

variety of programs. Mentors in these programs are more like godfathers and godmothers than the mentors in school-based programs. As they help the youth with problems in the home, school, or community, or with an agency or the police, these mentors actually become more like traditional youth workers than the benevolent volunteers of other kinds of mentoring programs (Freedman, 1991). In fact, these at-risk youth test the limits of what mentors, who have no special training, can do.

While some believe these youth need something more or different than a mentor--a social worker or community youth worker or professional psychologist--others simply point out that mentoring for at-risk youth must be part of a variety of services, including help from psychological and social service professionals. But even in community and social service programs, it is questionable whether the most seriously at-risk youth are chosen for mentoring. Since these youth can make a program look like a failure, some programs may not find it practical to work with them.

In practice, the distinction between who can be helped by the program and who cannot is not always clear. In school-based programs, teachers, counselors, and other program staff are often hard-pressed to explain why they have chosen some youth and not others. Most likely, they have used their intuition to decide who merits or will benefit from a mentoring program. Although idiosyncratic, this intuition may well be a more sensitive instrument than the taxonomies of youth characteristics commonly used in selecting clients for youth programs. But research needs to be conducted to understand better how these individuals are making decisions.

Planned mentoring takes place in an environment in which there are numerous adults, all of whom can be used more judiciously for mentoring youth.

The institutionalization of mentoring already is affecting how mentoring is carried out. Mentoring programs, like other youth services, end up involving a number of adult players. For example, a school-based program combines the efforts of volunteer mentors, teachers, and counselors who select the youth for the program, and a program director or school coordinator who organizes the activities and otherwise maintains the program. Often

there are also outside consultants who provide technical assistance during the conduct of the program. In addition, because the youth relate to a number of adults in the program, they inevitably fall under the influence of many new people. The naturalness of this expanded world of adult contacts is exactly what we hope for from mentoring.

In fact, it may be useful to think of two tiers of mentoring: the designated volunteer is the primary helper, but there is a secondary source of help from professionals and front-line staff who create a mentoring environment, rather than just an isolated mentoring relationship. Mentoring thought of as an environment rather than a relationship may help use scarce mentoring resources.

Program directors need to learn more about what makes mentoring pairs work, and they should establish standards for selecting and training volunteer mentors.

Because youth mentoring is at heart a volunteer enterprise, mentoring programs can easily fall victim to the fervor of their planners, who improvise rather than manage the mentoring. The mystique of mentoring is that creating a good match is all that is necessary for success, that mentoring is "program-proof." But program administrators have relatively little control over who mentors. While they can sometimes select particular mentors for the program, even here the pool is too small for them to be too fastidious. In reality, program administrators often must select and match youth with mentors without any solid basis for doing so, making matching far from foolproof.

Most programs attempt to match on the basis of shared race, gender, and explicit interests. However, as we have suggested, this may be superficial matching. The fact that mentoring programs rely heavily on volunteers, to whom they can only offer rudimentary training, means that these programs would do well to take seriously the natural styles of their pools of mentor volunteers. In other work, we have suggested that mentors are volunteers with intuitive styles of relating to youth. They can be:

- "nurturers" who want to offer help, attention, and support;

- o "trainers" who want to provide skills and inculcate appropriate behaviors;
- o "controllers" who want to correct or reward youth for their behavior;
- o "socializers" who want to be the youth's friend;or
- o "providers" who want to give the youth something concrete or an opportunity (Flaxman, 1992).

All these styles have their appropriate place, and can be most effective when used with students who most need that style of caretaking.

Most training is really only an orientation to the program's operation and rules. Volunteers are given a cursory introduction to adolescent development, urban sociology, and cultural differences. Some program training also includes brief simulations to help prospective mentors recognize different ways of interacting with youth. While professionals can be trained and supervised to use a repertoire of behaviors in interacting with youth, the common wisdom is that volunteers with their own professional commitments do not have the time or temperament for formal training, even if the program could provide it. Moreover, they have few ways of changing a mentor's ineffective behaviors, and cannot easily fire a mentor.

Finally, program planners do not fully consider the one area where they are not relying on volunteers: that is, program staff itself. Leadership qualities of program directors and the conceptual, technical, and human relations skills of the frontline staff are all important to a strong mentoring program. These staff are the link to the organization providing mentors, they also recruit youth and conduct training and orientations, they arrange mentoring activities, they intervene to solve problems, and they may even act as mentors. Since many have worked in a variety of youth programs, they have become professionals who can profit from professional development, training, and technical assistance (Hahn, 1992).

Mentoring should be integrated with other educational and youth services so that it becomes part of a coherent and thoughtful approach to enhancing youth development.

Our analysis of the New York City school-based programs suggests that, while some youth being mentored are also already receiving other services, some are receiving none other than mentoring. Moreover, the schools have no way of tracking this information. Even when the schools themselves control the services, these services are rarely linked into a coherent offering, and as currently organized, mentoring labors under the additional handicap of being only marginally related to the formal school programs and services, and remains just one of the "other services" available to youth.

To allow mentoring to reach its full potential, we must begin to integrate these services so that every youth can get what she or he needs. To achieve such an integration, we need to develop a better system for tracking students so that we can see risk as it emerges, as well as improve our judgments about selecting youth for particular programs. Mentoring programs, like all youth services, should be able to answer questions like: What services do youth need? Are they receiving it in the school or the community? Can my program supply what they need, and how can it be coordinated with the other services they are receiving to be sure the youth are getting full support. When this occurs, mentoring can nicely fit into a system of coherently related services.

To withstand the vagaries of fashion, funding for mentoring programs should be stabilized and integrated into education and youth services.

In the history of youth programs, soft or idiosyncratic patterns of funding have often prompted programs to change their identity and offerings to suit the latest fashion in youth programs. While some flexibility in response to the growth of theory and knowledge in a field is obviously good, no youth program can operate if it is vulnerable to whims of fashion.

Mentoring programs, which for the most part remain institutionally marginal, without their own budget line, are extremely vulnerable to these charges. New York State and New York City Board of Education are unusual in having allocated money to mentoring. The *New York State Mentoring Program*, founded by Matilda R. Cuomo, the *New York City*

Mentoring Program, and the *CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program* are all the result of government commitment to mentoring. However, in a period of increasingly tight budgets and shifts in interest, it is not clear how well any program can withstand outside pressure. Even within large community organizations, like the National Urban League or the United Way, mentoring is an initiative rather than a permanent program. While these and other institutions have transformed some of their educational and youth service programs into "mentoring programs" when companies and foundations realized that mentoring was becoming popular, these programs could just as easily change into something else as the winds of funding change.

Because the pressure to evaluate mentoring programs is mounting, program administrators and funders need to support research with the greatest potential for upgrading the process of mentoring, as well as for improving our understanding of the impact of mentoring on youth.

Mentoring administrators resist evaluations, both because these practitioners are service-oriented and would rather see funds spent directly on programs, and because many feel that a premature evaluation could jeopardize a good idea and endanger the program's support. At best, evaluations are seen as a way to demonstrate the success of the program, and so to raise support.

Nevertheless, the pressure to evaluate mentoring programs is mounting. Program funders want to know whether they are supporting viable programs, and policy makers want to be able to compare the cost-effectiveness of mentoring with that of other interventions, like education, training, and community service. The dilemma for program planners, then, is how to evaluate mentoring efforts when programs are newly formed and loosely conceived and when they operate with multiple goals.

Program administrators alone cannot evaluate the impact of mentoring on youth. This needs to be done by reputable outside evaluators. However, these evaluators need good record keeping within the project. Currently, all we have is dramatic anecdotes, unconfirmed impressions, and casual observations. For program administrators, funders, and

social planners these are not enough. They need to know what in the program contributes to its impact on the youth.

If the essential service of such a program is the mentoring, as distinct from education, training, enrichment, counseling, and so forth, then it is the interaction of the mentor and the youth which needs to be studied. Questionnaire studies alone do not help us enough to understand the true dynamics of the mentoring interaction, because both mentors and youth tend to give socially desirable answers to questions, rather than respond honestly.

Systematic or participant observation are better devices for understanding the mentoring relationship, as well as the mentoring environment in which these relationships may flourish or falter. These relatively unstructured devices provide a detailed and comprehensive description of what is going on in a particular scene. Investigators generate and explain hypotheses or assumptions, In this way they give administrators and funders an explanation about what is going on in the program or the relationship. In the largest sense, such research can help the program administrators ground the expedient decisions they must make.

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APPENDIX

Programs in the Study

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of New York City, Inc.
Trish Kerle
223 East 30th Street
New York, NY 10016
212-686-2042

Black Achievers in Industry Mentoring Program
Arnetta English
Harlem YMCA
180 West 135th Street
New York, NY 10030
212-281-4100

Boys Harbor Parent Mentor Program
Lonnie William, Executive Director
1 East 104th Street
New York, NY 10029
212-427-2244 ex. 587

Capital American Stock Exchange Career Mentoring Program
Yvonne Harris Jones, Coordinator
86 Trinity Place
New York, NY 10006

City University of New York/Board of Education Student Mentor Program
Eadie Shanker, Director of Special Collaborative Projects
Barry Kwalick, Director of the CUNY/BOE Student Mentor Program
101 West 31st Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10001
212-279-3950

Classroom, Inc.
Charles J. Snow, Coordinator
Morgan Stanley & Company
1251 Ave. of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Double Discovery
Frances Pena, Assistant Director of Talent Search
Columbia University
402 Ferris Booth Hall
New York, NY 10027
212-854-4326

Expanding Options for Teen Mothers
Sheila Turner, Project Director
New York City Technical College
250 Jay Street, M-407
Brooklyn, NY 11201-2983
718-260-5730

The Harlem-Dowling West Side Center for Children and Family Services.
Stanley Gleaton, Assistant Director of Development
2090 Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard (125th Street)
New York, NY 10027
212-749-3656 ex. 554

The Health Careers Partnership
Dee Baecher, Staff Development Coordinator
ISABELLA Geriatric Center
515-525 Audubon Avenue
New York, NY 10040
212-781-9800 ex. 485

I Have a Dream Foundation
Reuben and Arlene Mark
16 Otter Rock Drive
Greenwich, CT 06830
203-661-2837

LEAD Program
James Clark, Director of Operations
Columbia University, School of Business Administration
101 Uris Hall
New York, NY 10027
212-854-3485

New York Alliance for the Public Schools
Leslie Mantrone, Senior Program Coordinator
Mentor Program
32 Washington Place, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10003
212-998-6770

New York City Partnership's Career Mentoring Program
New York City School and Business Alliance
Sherri Dinacci, Mentoring Coordinator
One Baltery Park Plaza
New York, NY 10004
212-493-7405

New York City Mentoring Program
Ann Ensinger
Board of Education
110 Lovingston Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-935-5311

New York City School Volunteer Program, Inc.
Susan Edgar, Executive Director
443 Park Avenue South, 9th floor
New York, NY 10016
212-213-3370

New York State Mentoring Program
Jane Brody, Executive Director
11 West 42nd Street, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10036
212-790-2425

New York Telephone Mentoring Program
Magda Yrizarry, Manager of Educational Relations
1095 Ave. of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
212-395-5782

Project LIVE
Martha Cameron, Project Director
Children's Aid Society
105 East 22nd Street, Room 517
New York, NY 10011

United Negro College Fund/Citibank Fellows Program
Daria Sheehan
Citibank
850 Third Avenue 13th Floor
New York, NY 10043
212-559-9841

West Side High School
Ed Reynolds, Principal
40 West 102nd Street
New York, NY 10025
212-865-3410